

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1597

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SUBJECT: IMPRESSIONS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN CHINESE CITIES

DURING THE PERIOD OF CODEL FULBRIGHT VISIT

SUMMARY. FROM SEPTEMBER 7 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 14 CODEL FULBRIGHT VISITED SHANSI, HUNAN AND CHEKIANG PROVINCES, AND SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY. ASIDE FROM THE PROVINCIAL CAPITALS DELEGATION STAFF MEMBERS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO GLIMPSE POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN SEVERAL SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED CITIES DURING THE COURSE OF EXCURSIONS BY CAR. IN EVERY CITY VISITED DURING THE PERIOD-- WITH THE SINGLE EXCEPTION OF SHANGHAI--THERE WERE WIDESPREAD INDICATIONS OF A MASS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, AS EVIDENCED BY WALL POSTERS DATING FROM MAY THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1974. EVERYWHERE WHERE A MORE THAN CURSORY EXAMINATION WAS POSSIBLE IT APPEARED THAT THE PEAK OF POSTER ACTIVITY HAD PASSED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. NEWER POSTERS WERE INVARABLY MORE ANODYNE THAN OLDER ONES. END SUMMARY.

1. SHANSI PROVINCE. CODEL FULBRIGHT SPENT ONE NIGHT IN TAIYUAN FOLLOWING A VISIT TO TACHAI BRIGADE. TAIYUAN WAS LIBERALLY PLASTERED WITH POSTERS, MANY OF THEM TATTERED. CONSIDERABLE REMNANTS ATTESTED TO RECENT REMOVAL OF OTHER BIG CHARACTER POSTERS. IN MANY PLACES THE PHRASE "DOWN WITH HSIEH CHEN-HUA"

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WAS OBSERVED HASTILY PAINTED IN BLACK ON LAMPPOSTS OR THE

BASE OF WALLS. OTHER SLOGANS REFERRED TO HSIEH AS "LOCAL EMPEROR AND WARLORD." CODEL ESCORTS WERE FREE TO WALK STREETS OF TAIYUAN BEFORE BREAKFAST WITH A CAMERA. NO ONE TOOK MUCH NOTICE OR SEEMED TO OBJECT TO THEIR PHOTOGRAPHING POSTERS. WHEN ASKED ABOUT ATTACKS ON HSIEH CHEN-HUA, A TAIYUAN-BASED STAFF MEMBER SAID HE STILL HAD TITLE OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, BUT WAS NOT IN TAIYUAN AT PRESENT, HAVING BEEN GIVEN "ANOTHER ASSIGNMENT." POSTERS ATTACKING HSIEH CHEN-HUA WERE ALSO SEEN IN YANG CHUAN CITY, THE RAIL STOP NEAREST TACHAI. HERE AS WELL MOST OF THE POSTERS WERE OLD AND TATTERED. IN TWO SMALL COUNTY SEATS BETWEEN YANG CHUAN AND TACHAI--PING TING AND HSIYANG--THERE WERE ALSO MANY POSTERS IN THE STREETS.

2. HUNAN PROVINCE. CHANGSHA PRESENTED MUCH THE SAME PICTURE AS TAIYUAN. IF ANYTHING THERE WERE EVEN MORE BIG CHARACTER POSTERS AND SOME, USUALLY OF THE MORE AMODYNE VARIETY, WERE BEING PUT UP DURING THE TIME OF THE CODEL'S VISIT. ONCE AGAIN THERE WERE NUMEROUS IMPROMPTU-LOOKING SLOGANS IN BLACK PAINT ON GAGE POSTS AND TELEPHONE POLES. THE MOST COMMON ONE SEEMED TO BE "DOWN WITH YANG TA-YI". ON THE ROAD TO SHAO SHAN, CHAIRMAN MAO'S BIRTHPLACE, CODEL PASSED THROUGH THE MEDIUM-SIZED CITY OF HSIANG TAN. IN THE MAIN CROSSROADS AT THE CITY CENTER, AS WELL AS SPORADICALLY ALONG WITH HIGHWAY IN AND OUT OF TOWN, THERE WERE MANY BIG CHARACTER POSTERS. IN CHANGSHA, CODEL STAFFERS WERE DISCOURAGED FROM WALKING THROUGH TOWN, THOUGH PHOTOGRAPHY FROM CARS WERE NOT PROHIBITED. IN GENERAL, THE MOTORCADE WAS KEPT MOVING AT THE FASTEST POSSIBLE PACE CONSISTENT WITH SAFETY, OR MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE FASTER.

3. THERE WERE MANY POSTERS IN HANGCHOU BUT NO ACTIVITY WHICH APPEARED VERY RECENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 10. HANGCHOU POSTER ACTIVITY HAS ALREADY BEEN FULLY COVERED IN OTHER REPORTS.

4. SHANGHAI WAS VERY CLEAN. REMNANTS OF POSTERS COULD BE SEEN IN BACK ALLEYS BUT OTHERWISE THE CAMPAIGN APPEARS TO BE OVER THERE, OR LIMITED TO THE NORMAL PEKING PRACTICE OF POSTERS IN NON-PUBLIC BACK ROOMS ONLY.

5. IN NONE OF THE CITIES LISTED WAS THERE OVERT EVIDENCE OF DISORDER
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CONNECTED WITH THE CAMPAIGN NOR DID THE LEVEL OF EXCITEMENT SEEM VERY HIGH. ONLY ONCE OR TWICE WERE PEDESTRIANS SEEN TO BE READING POSTERS.

6. AT TACHAI, CHEN YUNG-KUEI HAD BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH CODEL BEFORE LUNCH (MEMCON FOLLOWS BY POUCH). IN CHANGSHA, VICE CHAIRMAN OF HUNAN PROVINCE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE SHANG TZU-

CHIN HOSTED A BANQUET, AS DID CHEKIANG VICE CHAIRMAN LAI K'O-K'O
IN HANGCHOU. NEITHER MEETING CONTAINED ANYTHING OF SUBSTANTIAL
POLITICAL INTEREST. IN SHANGHAI, CODEL MET FOR ABOUT ONE HOUR
WITH MUNICIPAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN
HSU CHING-HSIEN PRIOR TO THE BANQUET WHICH HE GAVE. A FULL
MEMCON OF THAT CONVERSATION FOLLOWS BY POUCH.
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